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Great Lakes water won't go west, Rogers claims

By George Weeks / *The Detroit News*

LANSING -- U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Brighton, says the White House has assured him that President Bush has no intention of trying to export Great Lakes water to thirsty western states.

After Bush had said in a July 17 roundtable interview with foreign reporters that he would "be open to any discussions" of a water pact with Canada, Rogers had joined Democratic Michigan Sens. Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow and others in firing off letters to Bush.

Rogers said he asked Jim Connaughton, chairman of Bush's Council on Environmental Quality, for a clarification. He added that he "reinforced my strong belief and the sense of Great Lakes citizens that Great Lakes water should not be for sale or trade."

After meeting with Connaughton, Rogers said "no one" in the Bush Administration is considering exporting Great Lakes water to the parched belt.

According to Rogers, Connaughton said the president's comments to reporters "were in no way directed at the Great Lakes but were based on his own personal experience in Texas where, as governor, he was involved in a water compact with Mexico."

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